EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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Los Alamos Lab Completes Excavation of Waste Disposal Site Used in the 1940s

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. – Los Alamos National Laboratory recently completed excavation of its oldest waste disposal site, Material Disposal Area B (MDA-B), thanks to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.

> **"The completion of the excavation of MDA-B is a landmark for our Recovery Act projects and environmental cleanup efforts."**
>
> *George Rael, Assistant Manager for Environmental Operations at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Los Alamos Site Office*

The excavation removed about 43,000 cubic yards of contaminated debris and soil from the six-acre site. MDA-B was used from 1944 to 1948 as a waste disposal site for Manhattan Project and Cold War-era research and production.

"The completion of the excavation of MDA-B is a landmark for our Recovery Act projects and environmental cleanup efforts," said George Rael, assistant manager for Environmental Operations at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Los Alamos Site Office.

Completion of the excavation ends EM cleanup activities funded by $212 million from the Recovery Act.

The excavation of MDA-B was conducted inside sturdy metal enclosures.

The excavated trench behind Enclosure 1, a moveable enclosure, will be filled with clean soil.

A closed circuit camera captured the final scoop of waste excavated from MDA-B.

To protect workers and the public, the excavation of MDA-B was performed inside sturdy metal structures that resemble airplane hangars. Excavation was monitored via closed circuit television and infrared sensors.

"Though some work remains to be done at MDA-B, the completion of excavation is an important milestone in a historic project," said Kevin Smith, manager of the National Nuclear Security Administration's Los Alamos Site Office. "When the project is complete, the land will be available for potential re-use."

In addition to the MDA-B cleanup, Recovery Act workers completed two other major projects — demolition of 24 Manhattan Project and Cold War buildings and installation of 16 regional groundwater monitoring wells.

"Our crew removed the waste from this 65-year-old disposal site safely and efficiently," said Bruce Schappell, executive director of the Recovery Act projects at the Lab. "Safety for the public, the environment, and our workers was always our top priority."

MDA-B consisted of narrow trenches up to 35 feet deep. Though most of the waste excavated from MDA-B was soil and general trash like cardboard and protective clothing, items uncovered during excavation included the remains of two mid-1940s pickup trucks, nearly 30 inert artillery shells and a calendar from 1946.